



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

517 East Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202

414 / 297-1700
TTY 414 / 297-1088

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NEWS SUMMARY:

United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic announced today the unsealing of a thirteen-count indictment charging six individuals with conspiring to steal United States Treasury checks, to deposit the stolen checks into accounts of fictitious check-cashing and tax-preparation services, and to launder the criminal proceeds by transferring those proceeds to other accounts controlled by members of the conspiracy.

The indictment charges each of the following individuals with conspiring to commit bank fraud and money laundering:

Gene Vaughn (DOB: 1/21/65), a/k/a “Barry Vaughn,” “Ken Murphy,” and “Carini Banks,”
Demetrious Garner (DOB: 4/14/75), a/k/a “Carini Banks,”
Tominka Vaughn (DOB: 7/24/73), a/k/a “Ruekia Redd,”
Jonathan Bernard Culbert, Jr. (DOB: 8/16/62),
Sheryl Lynn Culbert (DOB: 9/25/63), and
Alvyna Chanel Sanders (DOB: 9/4/80).

The indictment alleges that, between March 2001 and July 2002, the defendants conspired to have Jonathan B. Culbert, Jr., who was then employed at the postal distribution facility in Los Angeles, California, steal United States Treasury checks, which included tax refund checks issued by the Internal Revenue Service and monthly benefits checks issued by the Social Security Administration. The indictment alleges that, as part of the conspiracy, Jonathan B. Culbert, Jr. and Sheryl Culbert mailed stolen checks to Gene Vaughn in Milwaukee, where Gene Vaughn deposited the checks into bank accounts opened in the name of sham check-cashing and tax-preparation businesses, including an account that Gene Vaughn and Demetrious Garner established at Wells Fargo Bank in the name of “EZ Check Cashing.” According to the indictment, the defendants conspired to launder the proceeds of the crime by transferring those proceeds to bank accounts controlled by co-conspirators, including accounts maintained by Sheryl Culbert and Alvyna Sanders in Los Angeles, California.

Gene Vaughn and the other co-conspirators are alleged to have caused stolen Treasury checks totaling over \$400,000.00 to be deposited into sham bank accounts, and most of those deposits are alleged to have been made in the Milwaukee area. As a result of honoring the stolen Treasury checks deposited into the EZ Check Cashing account, victim bank Wells Fargo has suffered losses exceeding \$227,000.00.

In addition to alleging conspiracy charges against all six defendants, the indictment further alleges that defendants Gene Vaughn and Tominka Vaughn committed bank fraud offenses and that defendants Gene Vaughn, Jonathan B. Culbert, Jr., Sheryl Culbert and Alvyna Sanders committed money laundering offenses.

As a result of these charges, Gene Vaughn, Demetrious Garner, Tominka Vaughn, Jonathan B. Culbert, Jr., Sheryl Culbert, and Alvyna Sanders face up to 20 years' imprisonment and a fine of up to \$500,000.00.

The case was investigated by the United States Secret Service, U.S. Postal Service, and the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division. The case has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorneys Scott J. Campbell and Nelson W. Phillips III for prosecution.

The public is cautioned that an indictment is merely the formal method of returning charges against an individual and does not constitute inference of his or her guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until such time, if ever, that the government established his or her guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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For more information contact:
Assistant United States Attorney Scott J. Campbell
Assistant United States Attorney Nelson W. Phillips III
Public Affairs Liaison Francia Wendelborn
414-297-1700